



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

### **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2019, 7:00 PM**

**TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Chris Todd, Regular Members Donna Resutek and David Hurley, and Alternates Stefanie Cunningham and Bryan Platt

**ABSENT:** Alternate Sulakshana Thanvanthri

### **STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Acting Recording Clerk

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Sean Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (on non-agenda items): Paul Critchley, 8 Cherrywood Drive, President of New England Lean Consulting, and Liz Cole, Assistant Principal Ellington High School (EHS) were present to seek help connecting EHS students and local businesses.

Mr. Critchley explained an idea to connect students with businesses sparked by the level of media equipment available at EHS. He suggested connecting students and local businesses to assistance businesses with different media projects e.g. business videos, app development, media advertisement, etc.

Ms. Cole explained the school wants to provide multiple pathways for students interested in programs like graphic design, robotics, and mobile application development. Routinely projects developed by students are self-interest themed, but projects developed to meet a client's need expose students to a better learning experience. She explained a recent exercise Mr. Critchley organized providing business students the opportunity to participate in mock job interviews. Feedback from students is positive and there's interest to conduct more mock interviews. She'd like to develop more authentic opportunities for students while also giving back to the community. She mentioned student/business relationships may also lead to internships for students and provide them with real work experience.

Vice Chairman Todd suggested students develop a proposal acceptance form for businesses. He explained that a formal proposal process provides structure and will be easier for the commission to disseminate the opportunity to local businesses and match students with projects.

Mr. Critchley recently issued a Facebook Messenger post regarding the potential project and received replies from the Ellington Farmer's Market and LuAnn's. Ms. Cole explained in order to develop curriculum, it's important to see if there's interest from local businesses; and, based on the amount and types of interest, applicable programs can be developed.

Commissioner Hurley explained potential opportunities to partner with the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce. The commission has a business database and email blast list that can help in announcing the project, and the project proposal can be posted on the Town's Facebook page and Civic Send.

Vice Chairman Todd suggested the school reach out to Wallingford and Enfield to learn about their business to school partnerships. He'll contact the state department and provide Ms. Cole with other contacts that have experience with these types of programs.

Ms. Cole will ask the students to create a flyer. Ms. Houlihan will serve as the point of contact for the commission.

### **III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

#### **1. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce**

##### **a. Tolland County Chamber of Commerce 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting, Wednesday, October 2, 2019.**

Ms. Houlihan reported the Chamber's annual meeting was well attended. Representatives from Oakridge Dairy and The Modern Milkman and The Ivy were present to accept awards. Oakridge Dairy and The Modern Milkman for Economic Development and Best New Business and The Ivy for Beautification. She explained that Oakridge Dairy/Modern Milkman has hired a marketing specialist. She reviewed other award recipient from other Chamber towns.

#### **2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives**

The new Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD or Plan) was approved and will become effective November 30, 2019. In response to Commissioner Hurley, Ms. Houlihan explained the POCD was presented to CRCOG in July and found consist with state and regional plans. Copies of the new POCD will be provided to commissioners at an upcoming meeting.

She mentioned the Plan includes recommendations to adopt more agritourism-related regulations (e.g. hayrides, petting zoos, ice cream shop and baked goods, farm wineries/breweries). She recommended the commission review the Plan and develop potential regulations that promote agri-tourism for referral to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Ms. Houlihan described a recent seminar she attended regarding agri-tourism. She will collect information from the seminar, and other reputable resources, for review by the commission.

#### **3. Report: Sustainable Ellington**

##### **a. 1.4 - Provide Resources and Supports to Local Businesses**

##### **b. 1.5 - Promote Sustainable Workforce Development**

Chairman Kelly reviewed the award Ellington received from the Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS) for best practices in Land Use Planning and Economic Development. He reported that Ms. Houlihan, Lori Spielman, First Selectman, and he attended CEDAS's annual meeting on October 23, 2019, in Bridgeport at Steelpointe Harbor to receive the award.

Ms. Houlihan circulated the award and asked where commissioners though it should be displayed. They agreed the plaque should be posted near the public counter in the Planning Department.

Ms. Houlihan explained the Sustainable Ellington Committee was not established in a manner to meet the wide range of disciplines needed to gain certification. She reviewed the opportunity to enhance current best practices and implement more practices not currently in

place that are mentioned in the CEDAS program. She asked if the commission would like to replace the Sustainable Ellington item with the CEDAS Best Practices in Land Use Planning and Economic Development. By consensus the commission approved replacing Sustainable Ellington with the CEDAS program on future agendas. Commissioner Hurley explained that CEDAS plans to expand the best practices program and may include different levels of award in the future.

**4. Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs -** There was nothing to report.

**5. Report: Current Economic Activity**

Ms. Houlihan explained the Business After Hours event at DiFiore Ravioli tentatively set for December 10, 2019, has to be postponed. She explained that construction was delayed due to prolonged approval from North Central District Health Department, and DiFiore Ravioli will not open until after the holidays.

Construction at Big Y Express is underway. BarnYard, 9 Village Street, has commenced construction for an additional to its main facility and for a second office/warehouse building. Ms. Houlihan explained potential development by BarnYard and Earthlight north of BarnYard's current location on Route 83.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

**1. Approval of the September 11, 2019 regular meeting minutes.**

**MOVED (TODD) SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2019 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

**2. Approval of 2020 Economic Development Commission meeting schedule.**

**MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE 2020 EDC MEETING SCHEDULE AS WRITTEN.**

**3. Correspondence:**

**a. Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS) Best Practices in Economic Development & Land Use Planning application criteria and congratulations email.**

The item was discussed under Sustainable Ellington Active Business Report.

**b. Oakridge Dairy and Modern Milkman article published in the fall edition of CT Food and Farm.**

Chairman Kelly reviewed the content of the article.

**c. 2020-2021 Capital Improvements Budget Requests addressed to Agency Chairpersons and Department Heads.**

Commissioners reviewed the capital improvement budget request memo. They discussed potential proposals like additional *Welcome to Ellington* signs at gateways to town and installation of audio and video equipment in the meeting room for presentations. Ms. Houlihan explained ongoing efforts by the Department of Public Works for welcome signs and existing operating budgets for technology improvements.

Vice Chairman Todd asked if funds originally earmarked for GoLocal remained available. Ms. Houlihan explained funding for GoLocal was approved for contracted services and may be used for other contracted services relevant to the Commission's purview. Vice Chairman Todd suggested revisiting past ideas from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center. Ms. Houlihan will review historical records for details and share information with the Commission.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (RESUTEK) SECONDED (CUNNINGHAM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO  
ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:01 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa Houlihan, Acting Recording Clerk